Appendix F:
Guidelines for the Sign Language Interpreter Accommodation

A sign language interpreter (interpreter) should be provided whenever a student requires sign language support to access a state test. It is best practice to provide a licensed educational interpreter that is familiar with the student and the classroom content. The following procedures for test administrators and interpreters ensure that appropriate language access is provided while maintaining the integrity of the test.

Start of the School Year

1. Local test coordinators must inform interpreters of test administration policies.

2. Interpreters must have access in advance to the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan so that they are familiar with which accommodations are required by the student and which portions of the test are permitted to be interpreted. Please refer to *During Test Administration* for additional information.

3. The sign language used during test administration should be consistent with the sign language routinely used during classroom instruction. If the student's familiar interpreter is not used during testing, the interpreter should confer with the student's Teacher of the Deaf and IEP team to understand content-specific signs that may be needed for testing.

Before Test Administration

1. Interpreters must sign the *Non-Disclosure Agreement for Accommodations on Ohio's State Tests*.

2. Test administrators should collaborate with interpreters as to whether a student requires additional tools, devices, assistive technology, or adaptive equipment that have been approved for use during the test, and whether any of these features impact the interpretation of the test. Test administrators must inform the interpreter of any of these additional accessibility features required by the student.

3. The interpreter can have access to the paper form of the test 48 hours prior to test administration.

During Test Administration

1. Interpreters must interpret general test directions. General directions include the scripted information for students that comes before the test starts. After the test administrator has read the general directions, interpreters may clarify what was read/signed if the student requests.

2. Once students have begun the test, interpreters should use signs that are conceptually accurate, with or without simultaneous voicing based on student need/preference. Interpreters should interpret only the content that is printed in the test book or on the computer screen, maintaining the intent of the question, without changing, emphasizing, or adding information that is not necessary for the translation between languages.

3. For mathematics, science, and social studies, interpreters may sign all test content including passages, test items, and response options. For information specific to English language arts, please refer to the student's IEP and the *Ohio Accessibility Manual* to verify if the student qualifies for a reading access accommodation.

4. Interpreters should move through the test at the student's pace and should not navigate away from the current test question until the student indicates that they are ready.

5. Interpreters may not expand upon, provide additional information, assist, or influence the student's selection of a response in any way.

6. Interpreters should not attempt to solve mathematics problems or determine the correct answer to a test item while signing, as this may result in pauses or changes ininflection which may mislead the student.

7. Interpreters must pause for a few seconds before signing the response options. The interpreter must give equal emphasis to each response option.

8. If the student selects their answer(s) before the interpreter has signed all the answer choices, the interpreter or test administrator can ask if the student wants theother response options to be signed.

Procedures for Signing Test Content

- Interpreters should emphasize only the words printed in **boldface,** *italics,* or CAPITAL LETTERS and inform the student that the words are printed that way. No other emphasisor inflection is permitted.

- Interpreters must use facial expressions consistent with the parameters of sign language and must not use expressions which may be interpreted by the student as approval or disapproval of the student's response(s).

- When an interpreter uses a sign that can represent more than one concept or English word, they must adequately contextualize the word to reduce ambiguity. The interpreter also may spell the word after signing it if there is any doubt about which meaning is intended.

- Interpreters must use the same signs if the student requests a portion be repeated. If the request for repetition is due to an interpreter error, the interpreter should indicate this and resign the portion, while preserving the intent of the question.

After Test Administration

1. Interpreters must not discuss any test content with others. All test items are secure material.

2. Interpreters must not discuss a student's performance with others.